

II. CPUSA POLICY CONCERNING NEGROES

The basic position, policy and program of the CPUSA with respect to Negroes since the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern in 1928 is implicit in two slogans: "equal rights" and "self-determination" for Negroes in the South. The Sixth Congress formulated and issued the first pronouncement of the Comintern on the Negro question in the United States. The Negro people in this country were defined in a resolution as an "oppressed race" in the South struggling for "self-determination" and an oppressed national minority in other parts of the country fighting for equal rights. The resolution directed the CPUSA to "come out openly and unreservedly for the right of Negroes to national self-determination in the southern states." (u)

By this theory of "self-determination," communists meant that in many counties of the southern states Negroes composed a majority of the population and, as a separate race, they constituted a nation with the right, if they so desired, to secede from the United States and form their own nation and government. This concept was adhered to and developed by the CPUSA for nearly 30 years. (u)

The complete speciousness of the communist line of "self-determination," which the Party blindly and slavishly followed for so long on orders from Moscow, is readily apparent. It would result, as noncommunist Negro leaders repeatedly pointed out, not in the integration of the Negro into American life on the basis of equality--which is the fundamental goal of the Negro in the United States--but in the worst kind of segregation. (u)

The policy of "self-determination" was questioned more and more in Party circles following Stalin's death in March, 1953. In December, 1958, some members pointed out that the Party, through its adherence to such a position, was in effect advocating the segregation of Negroes from the rest of the population. Members of the Party's National Committee recommended that the policy of "self-determination" be modified or abandoned. However, they did not dare make a change without Soviet approval. (u)

As a consequence, in February, 1959, James Jackson, a top leader of the CPUSA and a delegate to the 21st Congress of the CP of the Soviet Union in Moscow, presented the proposed change to the Soviets for their endorsement. On his

return to this country, Jackson reported to Party leaders that the Soviets had approved discontinuing the policy of "self-determination." ✓

In December, 1959, the CPUSA, at its 17th National Convention; adopted a resolution which brought an end to the 30-year-old policy of "self-determination." The resolution replaced it with a call for equality for the Negro throughout the United States in all phases of political, social and economic life--in other words, full and complete integration.

At the present time, American communists seek to equate and link the movement for Negro freedom in the United States with the communist campaign for "peaceful coexistence" throughout the world. Political Affairs, monthly theoretical organ of the CPUSA, declared in its July, 1963, issue: (4)

"The key to the future, in fighting both for peace and civil rights, clearly lies in the strengthening and advancement of the mass movements and struggles. In fact, both the possibility and the need of setting masses in motion now exist as never before. In this connection, the fight for Negro freedom has become the focal point, which at this juncture holds the key to all other struggles, including the fight for peace. What is demanded, therefore, is that all progressive and Left forces, and especially all Communists, throw themselves fully into the battles which lie ahead on this front."

In late August, 1963, one of our sources advised that the CP's current policy on the Negro question in general is based on the Party's estimate of the capitalist system in the United States and its conclusion that the present struggle for Negro rights is objectively a struggle for socialism in this country. Therefore, the source indicated, the CP endorses and supports the program and activities of the civil rights movement and organizations because it is the Party's judgment that during the course of the struggle for Negro rights, the Negro people will find that it is capitalism which is restricting their full development. (u)

The Party is attempting, the source said, through its agitation and propaganda, to transform the Negro struggle into an anticapitalist struggle. The Party believes, according to this source, that the Negro struggle advances the cause of socialism and communism for the reason that sooner or later this struggle will come into a head-on collision with the capitalist system. As a result, the source said, the Negro people will realize that only socialism can solve their problems and satisfy their needs. ✓